

# Ex-Employe Doubts CIA Probe Sincerity

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SAN DIEGO—A former Central Intelligence Agency employe who told 10 days ago of being aware of CIA mail surveillance of American citizens in 1958-59 is now charging here that the commission President Ford appointed to look into such allegations isn't really interested in doing so.

Dr. Mel Crain, a 53-year-old San Diego State University political science professor, said in an interview that since he detailed the alleged illegal surveillance he has heard from congressional investigators but not from the staff of the commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller.

"My impression of this commission is that it's trying to protect the agency," Crain said. "That's essentially what they're up to. I don't think they really want to delve."

In Washington, D.C., Friday, a commission spokesman replied, "Don't lean on us too hard." He said the commission staff is just getting organized and that it is the commission's intention "to at least contact everyone who can contribute to the investigation."

Accounts of interviews with Crain have run in recent days at length in such prominent newspapers as the New York Times, and partial confirmation of what he had to say has come from his immediate supervisor at the CIA in the late 1950s, Richard M. Bissell, then deputy director of the CIA's office of plans.

Essentially, what Crain has said is that he received a high security clearance in the fall of 1958 that made him aware that the Post Office Department was covertly assisting the CIA to intercept and copy letters American citizens were sending to the Soviet Union.

He reports that the briefing officer who gave him his initial information about the surveillance "said right out, 'this is unconstitutional and illegal, but remember, we're in the Cold War and our mission demands it.'"

Crain said that his objections to the surveillance "hastened" his departure from the CIA, via resignation, in June, 1959, after eight years with the agency.

Although the professor said he has long routinely told his students that the CIA spied on American citizens, the first time such reports sparked any interest came in the wake of recent published reports about alleged wide-ranging CIA domestic surveillance in violation of the agency's charter.

Then, Crain was approached and granted an interview to a San Diego Union reporter.

Crain acknowledged in a Thursday afternoon Times interview that he is violating written agreements he made with the CIA not to reveal anything publicly about his work with the agency and he said he believed that technically he is in violation of the law for doing so.

But he said he believes a thorough airing of allegedly illegal CIA activities is in order.

Crain said that even before the alleged mail surveillance alarmed him, he had become concerned at the increasing concentration inside the CIA on clandestine operations, some of which he described as "just crazy."

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